

9 FAM PART IV Appendix E, 700 INSTRUCTIONS RELATING TO CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

(TL:VISA-269; 05-02-2001)

9 FAM 701 PROMPT RESPONSES ESSENTIAL

(TL:VISA-269; 05-02-2001)

It is most important to answer promptly inquiries from Members of Congress. Posts *may respond to inquiries by telegram, e-mail, a letter or fax.* Posts are reminded that congressional inquiries must be answered within 3 working days. Implicit in the congressional use of a telegram is a desire for a prompt reply, preferably within 2 working days. Replies to such inquiries should be courteous and friendly, and the content as fully responsive to the inquirer as possible under the law and regulations. Posts should also try to anticipate and answer further questions which may arise based on the information post is providing.

9 FAM 702 COPIES FOR DEPARTMENT

(TL:VISA-269; 05-02-2001)

If the Department has requested a copy of the post's reply or has asked to be kept informed of developments in the case, *posts must furnish a copy of their reply to any interested party* to the Department.

9 FAM 703 USE LAYMAN'S LANGUAGE

(TL:VISA-269; 05-02-2001)

Drafters should prepare telegrams, *letters, faxes or e-mails* in unclassified language intelligible to the layman. *Posts should send telegrams* through Department facilities using the format shown in 9 FAM Part IV Appendix E, Exhibit I. *Drafters should keep in mind* that congressional offices frequently forward post communications directly to the interested constituent.

9 FAM 704 REPLY TO APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE

(TL:VISA-119; 7-3-95)

Drafting officers should take special care to ensure that a reply to an inquiry from a Congressional district office is directed to the district office and not to the Washington office of the Member of Congress. When such replies are misdirected, the result is a delay of several days before the reply reaches the proper destination. This often results in the originating office making a follow-up inquiry when a reply has in fact already been sent.

9 FAM 705 ALWAYS USE REFERENCES

(TL:VISA-119; 7-3-95)

Drafting officers must ensure that outgoing replies always reference the incoming inquiry. If the reference is omitted, the information copy which is automatically sent to the Visa Office by the communication center will not always reach the proper file.

9 FAM 706 INCLUDE NAME AND ADDRESS OF CONSTITUENT

(TL:VISA-119; 7-3-95)

Congressional offices have indicated that including the name and address of the constituent, when known, is helpful to them in locating a case, which often is filed under the name of the constituent rather than the name of the visa applicant.

9 FAM 707 CODE-WORDS NOT TO BE USED IN CORRESPONDENCE

(TL:VISA-269; 05-02-2001)

Posts should never use telegraphic code words *when communicating with Congress* since their meanings are not known to congressional offices. For instance, posts which notify interested congressional offices of a visa issuance may not use the code-word "ANTELOPE."

9 FAM 708 INCLUDE DATE OF ISSUANCE

(TL:VISA-269; 05-02-2001)

Correspondence regarding visa issuance should always include the date of issuance and, if known, travel plans.

9 FAM 709 WHEN NOT TO COMMUNICATE INFORMATION

(TL:VISA-269; 05-02-2001)

Posts cannot communicate information if:

- (1) Information is classified in nature;
- (2) The post has doubts on the subject matter of its reply. (In such cases a letter may be sent to the addressee through the Department under cover of a transmittal slip for Department review and final disposition, or a telegram may be sent to the Department requesting that the Department forward the reply to the Congressional office); or
- (3) Messages from the Department specifically request *that the* reply *be sent* to the Department. (Posts are reminded to ensure that the cabled reply contains a "State" reference so that the proper officer in the Department will receive it.)